

In the Claims:

The following listing of claims replaces all previous listings and versions:

1. (currently amended) An agricultural soil treating agent comprising an aqueous mixture of a C1 to C4 alkyl siliconate compound and a silicate compound, with the compounds being present at a molar ratio of silicate compound to siliconate compound of 0.5/1 to 10/1 and in amount effective to increase hydrophobicity of the soil after the aqueous mixture is applied thereto due to the formation of silicic acid or silica gel therein in order to reduce water evaporation from the treated soil, wherein the siliconate compound is present in an amount of about 0.1 and 1% by weight and the silicate compound is present in an amount of about 0.01 and 5% by weight.
2. (previously amended) The agent of claim 1 wherein the siliconate compound is an alkali metal alkyl siliconate, the silicate compound is an alkali metal silicate, and the molar ratio is about 1:1 to 5:1.
3. (previously amended) The agent of claim 1 wherein the siliconate compound is an alkali metal methyl siliconate, the silicate compound is a sodium or potassium hydrosoluble silicate, and the molar ratio is about 1:1 to 5:1.
4. (previously amended) The agent of claim 1 wherein the siliconate compound is a sodium or potassium methyl siliconate, the silicate compound is a sodium or potassium ortho or meta-silicate, and the molar ratio is about 2:1 to 3:1.
5. (cancelled)
6. (previously amended) The agent of claim 1 wherein the soil to be treated comprises sand and the agent further comprises a coloring agent, an agrochemical principle or both.
7. through 16. (cancelled)

17. (previously amended) The agent of claim 6 which contains both a coloring agent and an agrochemical principle.

18. (previously amended) The agent of claim 1 wherein, after being applied to the soil, the siliconate compound is present in an amount of between about 2 and 60 Kg per hectare, and the silicate compound is present in the treated substrate in an amount of between about 3 and 150 Kg per hectare.

19. (currently amended) The agent of claim 18 wherein the agricultural soil includes one or more of sand, gravel, tree bark, sawdust, compost, or earth, ~~or other solid porous materials,~~ and the amount of water needed for application of the aqueous mixture is reduced by a factor of two compared to that needed for the application of a siliconate by itself for the same reduction of water evaporation from the treated soil.

20. (previously amended) An agricultural soil treating agent consisting essentially of a solution of an agrochemical principle and an aqueous mixture of a C1 to C4 alkyl siliconate compound and a silicate compound, with the compounds being present at a molar ratio of silicate compound to siliconate compound of 0.5/1 to 10/1 and in combination in amount effective to increase hydrophobicity of the soil after the agent is applied thereto due to the formation of silicic acid or silica gel therein in order to reduce water evaporation from the treated soil.

21. (previously amended) The agent of claim 20 wherein the siliconate compound is an alkali metal alkyl siliconate, the silicate compound is an alkali metal silicate, and the molar ratio is about 1:1 to 5:1.

22. (previously amended) The agent of claim 20 wherein the siliconate compound is an alkali metal methyl siliconate, the silicate compound is a sodium or potassium hydrosoluble silicate, and the molar ratio is about 1:1 to 5:1.

23. (previously amended) The agent of claim 20 wherein the siliconate compound is a sodium or potassium methyl siliconate, the silicate compound is a sodium or potassium ortho or meta-silicate, and the molar ratio is about 2:1 to 3:1.

24. (previously amended) The agent of claim 20 wherein the siliconate compound is present in an amount of about 0.1 and 1% by weight and the silicate compound is present in an amount of about 0.01 and 5% by weight.

25. (previously amended) The agent of claim 20 wherein the soil to be treated comprises sand and the agent also contains a coloring agent.

26. (previously amended) The agent of claim 20 wherein, after being applied to the soil, the siliconate compound is present in an amount of between about 2 and 60 Kg per hectare, and the silicate compound is present in the treated substrate in an amount of between about 3 and 150 Kg per hectare.

27. (currently amended) The agent of claim 20 wherein the agricultural soil includes one or more of sand, gravel, tree bark, sawdust, compost, or earth, or other solid porous materials, and the amount of water needed for application of the solution is reduced by a factor of two compared to that needed for the application of a siliconate by itself for the same reduction of water evaporation from the treated soil..

28. (currently amended) An agricultural soil treating agent consisting of a solution of an aqueous mixture of a C1 to C4 alkyl siliconate compound and a silicate compound, with the compounds being present at a molar ratio of silicate compound to siliconate compound of 0.5/1 to 10/1 and in combination in amount effective to increase hydrophobicity of the soil after the agent is applied thereto due to the formation of silicic acid or silica gel therein in order to reduce water evaporation from the treated soil, wherein the siliconate compound is present in an amount of about 0.1 and 1% by weight and the silicate compound is present in an amount of about 0.01 and 5% by weight.

29. (previously amended) The agent of claim 28 wherein the siliconate compound is an alkali metal methyl siliconate, the silicate compound is a sodium or potassium hydrosoluble silicate, and the molar ratio is about 1:1 to 5:1.

30. (previously amended) The agent of claim 28 wherein the siliconate compound is a sodium or potassium methyl silicate, the silicate compound is a sodium or potassium ortho or meta-silicate, and the molar ratio is about 2:1 to 3:1.